framework, Donne's Fourth Satyre becomes a disturbingly powerful and wildly dangerous commentary on the failings of court society, evoking both 'wonder' and 'admiration' through the sheer wit, bravado, and boldness of its incisive commentary. The relentless pursuit of witty wonder in poetry began to lose much of its appeal by the middle of the seventeenth century and, as Biester elegiacally notes, 'admirable lyric wit was the flamboyant finale of courtier poetry, its flameout before extinction'. His thought-provoking and superbly researched study of its impact on Elizabethan and Jacobean literature should be regarded as essential reading by all students of the period.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. **Othello**. Edited by E. A. J. HONIGMANN. Pp. xvi+410 (The Arden Shakespeare). Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1997. Cloth, £30; paper, £5·99.

JOHN FLETCHER and WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. **The Two Noble Kinsmen**. Edited by LOIS POTTER. Pp. xvi+396 (The Arden Shakespeare). Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson, 1997. Cloth, £30; paper, £5·99.

This, the third edition of the Arden Shakespeare (of which the general editors are now Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, and David Scott Kastan), was to have been published by Routledge, itself the metamorphosis of the original publisher, Methuen, but in one of those takeovers that have become so common recently, the series was bought up by Thomas Nelson, currently an 'International Thompson Publishing Company'. Given this unstable history, it is hard to know who deserves credit for the typographical facelift. When I last reviewed a volume of the Arden Shakespeare in this journal (vol. 36, August 1985) I complained about its 'badly designed, overcrowded pages, which make reading a tiring affair', and suggested that 'the publishers might well consider a new layout for those volumes currently undergoing revision' (p. 422). Unused to publishers taking notice of my suggestions I was gratified to find a freshly designed, and much more legible page. A new typeface (Ehrhardt) is used throughout; the words glossed in the notes are now picked out in bold face; and the textual collations, previously dividing text and notes, are now relegated to the foot of the page. The end effect compares well with the rival Oxford and Cambridge editions.

Ernst Honigmann's *Othello*, replacing the second Arden edition (1958) by M. R. Ridley, was commissioned in 1982, his preface tells us, to be completed by 1988. Many other enterprises have intervened, including Professor Honigmann producing a separate monograph entitled *The Texts of 'Othello'* (Routledge, 1996), but in general the longer editors take over Shakespeare the better. Honigmann has lived with this play for many years, and readers will draw the fruits in terms of the wide range of primary and secondary material brought to bear on the play. However, long immersion has its dangers, as I have observed here before (vol. 36, pp. 419, 422), for editors tend to develop a proprietary attitude to their play, and repudiate all negative criticism of it. So the first section of Honigmann's long (111-page) introduction is headed 'The Greatest Tragedy?', to which the final section reverts: 'Again: The Greatest Tragedy?'. Irked by the tendency of critics since Bradley to downgrade *Othello*, compared to *Lear* or *Hamlet*, Honigmann defends it with two main arguments, one biographical, one metaphysical. For the first, he suggests that Iago represents a part of Shakespeare, so that writing his words 'was partly a voyage of self-discovery'; conversely, the close relationship between Iago and Othello is both the sign of 'a potential interior split' and 'something deeply imbedded in the dramatist' (pp. 105–6). For the second, he feels that 'a malign force, not simply Iago, acts against' Desdemona (p. 73), and sees her competing against Iago for Othello's soul 'almost like Mephistopheles and the

Good Angel for Faustus's', the victory going to Desdemona, in which 'Love and Goodness defeat Evil' (pp. 108–10). I cannot do much with either biographical or metaphysical approaches, and think it less important to rank the tragedies than to discover the critical approach most suitable for each.

Honigmann's approach, as he freely admits (pp. 13, 111) may seem 'old-fashioned' since it gives great space to character criticism (pp. 13–61). There is nothing wrong with this, for in mimetic genres such as drama or the novel the interaction of human beings constitutes the primary stage of literary experience. Only dramatic characters are always conceived in relationship to each other and to an overall design, and in this play it is notoriously difficult to do justice to both Iago and Othello. Where many modern critics, especially feminists bent on indicting Othello as showing the evils of patriarchy, virtually ignore Iago, Honigmann gives many illuminating comments, in both the introduction and notes, on Iago's characteristic attitudes and actions. He brings out well Iago's continuing resentment at being overlooked (pp. 34–5), and notes Shakespeare's transformation of Cinthio's Ensign into a daring gambler and risk-taker (p. 71), one who takes charge of a situation with astonishing speed cf. I. i, II. i and iii, III. iii, and V. i (p. 87), an aggressor whose favourite manœuvre is 'retreating in order to attack' (p. 62). The notes often point out the hypocrite's skills: 'How characteristic of Iago to accuse Brabantio of shamelessness [I. i. 85] just when he himself speaks so shamelessly!' (p. 121); Iago's speech to Roderigo (I. iii. 321) 'is a mock sermon, using theological commonplaces' (p. 156); Iago, 'already a hardened cheater' (p. 159), 'has a habit of weighing probabilities' (p. 201), describing his own advice as 'Probal to thinking' (II. iii. 333). Particularly illuminating is Honigmann's description of Iago as the 'direct descendant of the intriguing slave of classical comedy', the *servus* who 'soliloquizes about ways and means, cries "*habeo*!" when he sees how to proceed ("I have't, it is engendered!", I. 3. 402), treats others—including his master—as dimwits . . .' (pp. 75–7). The notes contain a running commentary on the many parallels between *Othello* and classical comedy (index, s.v. 'Plautus', 'Terence').

As for Iago's effect on Othello, Honigmann well notes that 'as Iago's poison enters his mind he seems to change more completely than other tragic heroes: we must not confuse his earlier and later self' (p. 19), until by III. iii 'Othello is almost the ventriloquist's dummy' (p. 239), dutifully echoing Iago's suggestions. But Honigmann does not seem to have drawn the consequences of Iago's total manipulation to make a fair estimate of Othello. It is just too easy to fault Othello as lacking in self-knowledge (p. 25), a judgement made in detachment from the claustrophilic experience of the play. I was disappointed to find Honigmann endorsing T. S. Eliot's reading of Othello in his final speech as 'endeavouring to escape reality' or even '*cheering himself up*' (p. 83), an influential evaluation extended by F. R. Leavis (p. 24), both critics virtually ignoring Iago's amazing distortion and inversion of reality. Since Honigmann has written perceptively on the Moor's problems in assimilating into the culture of Venice (pp. 27–31), the emphasis on his Christianity forming part of this process of acculturation (pp. 22–3), then Othello's penultimate speech (before his dying apology to Desdemona) must be seen as the reversal of that integration. In describing the 'malignant . . . turbaned Turk' who 'Beat a Venetian and traduced the state', Othello identifies himself with that 'circumcised dog', his suicide proclaiming his judgement on himself as no longer worthy to be a Christian member of a civilized community.

Properly responding to literary characters demands a combination of involvement, without which we never get close enough to understand their natures and problems, with the detachment needed to judge them. Honigmann has more of the second quality, using his footnotes to direct a series of questions at his readers, provoking them to judgement: 'How well does he know his daughter?' (p. 141), he asks of Brabantio's description of the 'still and quiet' Desdemona (I. iii. 95 ff.). 'Did Othello or Brabantio

deceive himself?' he asks a moment later, and 'How does Brabantio react to this line?' (p. 143). Some of these questions sound pedagogic, as if they were meant for an exam paper, others infer some moral or psychological judgement, as on Othello's description of how Desdemona fell in love (I. iii. 138 ff.): 'How well does he understand her love, or his own?' (p. 145), or 'They both almost repudiate the body [surely not true of Desdemona's assertion of the "rites" of love]: how well do they know themselves?' (p. 152). There are many more questions, concerning Cassio: 'Is he weak—or innocent?' (p. 184); Emilia—'"easy virtue" is in character, but her willingness to do anything for Iago less so. Is she joking?' (p. 293); Othello's 'motives are as confused as Iago's. Does he really care what happens to *more men*?' (p. 306). When Emilia cries 'Let heaven and men and devils . . . cry shame against me, yet I'll speak' (V. ii. 219–20), the editor asks '*shame* because she defies her husband?' (p. 321). When Othello states, 'For nought I did in hate but all in honour' (V. ii. 292), Honigmann glosses that phrase as meaning 'with honourable intent', before asking 'Is he deceiving himself?' (p. 327). It is hard to know whether the editor is himself undecided, or whether he wants to unsettle his readers.

The introduction is certainly challenging, helpful in many ways, but suffers from being divided into separate topics. Under the rubric 'Morality and "The Moral"' Honigmann observes that in the final scene Shakespeare makes each character denounce Iago as a slave, villain, viper, and so on (p. 59): but this point needs to be related to the working through and ultimate collapse of the plots by which Iago has deceived everyone. The section on 'Dislocated Language' (pp. 81–2) treats at the linguistic level a phenomenon that should have been discussed earlier in connection with plot, character, and psychology. Some topical division is inevitable, of course, but the unity of the play should not be lost from sight.

Many scholarly issues are handled with admirable clarity and authority. For the dating, Honigmann gives convincing arguments to shift it back from 1603–4 to late 1601–2 (pp. 1–8). For the textual problem he argues that both the 1622 Quarto and 1623 Folio 'derive from scribal transcripts copied from two authorial manuscripts', some variant readings representing Shakespeare's first and second thoughts (pp. 1–2, 351–67). Having reached the pragmatic position of choosing freely from either Q or F as each situation demands, Honigmann, always the enemy of complacency, leaves us with the unsettling suggestion that his text, although 'less committed to F as "copy-text" than previous editors' may still print 'scores—or perhaps hundreds—of F variants that are scribal or compositional substitutions, not the words written by Shakespeare' (p. 359), a disturbing thought.

A particularly valuable feature of Arden 3 is that 'the commentary offers many scores of new notes that attempt to convey the contemporary flavour of Shakespeare's language with greater precision' than earlier editions (p. 86). Accordingly, these notes frequently record the first instance of Shakespeare's use of a word, many of them special coinages for this character in this situation, such as Iago's 'nonsuits' (I. i. 15): 'stops the suit of, refuses (legal: causes the voluntary withdrawal of the petition) (unique to Shakespeare)' (p. 116), a piece of legalistic jargon suiting this barrack-room lawyer; or Montano's 'self-charity' (II. iii. 198) or 'regard for oneself', one of several compounds with 'self-' coined by Shakespeare (p. 194), as again 'self-bounty' (p. 221). The notes also usefully inform readers which words had stronger connotations in Shakespeare's day, such as 'purchase' (II. iii. 9), 'a richer word than now' (p. 184), or 'terrible' (I. i. 81), 'stronger than today: terrifying' (p. 121). Moderns tend to use oaths and imprecations indiscriminately, but our editor restores the Elizabethans' precision, in which 'God bless the mark' (I. i. 32) is 'An apologetic or impatient exclamation when something horrible or disgusting has been said' (p. 117), and 'Good God' (III. iii. 177) is 'not the modern (devalued) exclamation but an appeal to God's goodness' (p. 219). Among many valuable glosses I pick out that on Desdemona's sense of herself

'mamm'ring' (III. iii. 70): 'An unkind word, unique in Shakespeare, signalling her critical surprise' (p. 212), and her sadness at standing 'within the blank' of Othello's displeasure (III. iv. 129): not 'the white spot in the centre of the target' (*OED*), but 'point-blank range' (p. 249, citing an essay by J. R. Hale). When Iago says of his insinuations about Desdemona, 'I speak not yet of proof' (III. iii. 199), the note reads 'proof of guilt. Othello spoke of proof of guilt *or innocence*' (p. 220). This editor is a close reader, and will generate others.

Yet there are some instances where the help given is inadequate or erroneous. In the Duke's facile consolation of Brabantio, 'When remedies are past the griefs are ended', 'griefs' can mean 'grievances' as well as 'sorrows' (p. 148); 'abuse' is rightly glossed as 'cheat, deceive' (III. iii. 203), but not when Iago speaks of his plan 'to abuse Othello's ear' (I. iii. 394). The word 'secure' (III. ii. 201) meant not just 'free from apprehension' but also 'complacent, slothful' as again at IV. i. 84 ('To lip a wanton in a secure couch'). When Iago dismisses love as 'a permission of the will' (I. iii. 335), Honigmann writes '*permission*: perhaps alluding to God's "permissive will", which tolerates the existence of evil (see *Paradise Lost*, 3. 685)' (p. 157): but Iago only refers to the will indulging what it should restrain, according to the classical idea of reason controlling the passions. Emilia's disclosure that she will conceal Desdemona's handkerchief to please Iago's 'fantasy' (III. iii. 303) surely means 'fancy' or 'whim', rather than 'habit of deluding oneself (*OED* 3)' (p. 228). When Othello reviews Desdemona's virtues, including 'of so high and plenteous wit and invention' (IV. i. 187), the editor finds these 'unexpected attributes' (p. 265): I do not. Nor am I convinced that the strawberries embroidered on Othello's handkerchief 'might suggest a hidden evil, or the purity of the Virgin . . . Or drops of blood?' (p. 237)—although some critics have done worse.

Occasionally no note is offered where readers might have appreciated help, as with Othello's words 'I dote | In mine own comforts' (II. i. 205–6); or Iago's 'reward me | For making him egregiously an ass' (II. i. 306–7); or Cassio's 'To be now a sensible man' (II. iii. 300). Debts to the *trivium* are not always glossed: Iago's 'invention' (II. i. 125) refers to *inventio*, the basic process in rhetoric; 'position' (II. i. 234) and 'issues' (III. iii. 223) are logical terms, while 'O bloody period!' (V. ii. 355) comes from grammar and punctuation, the full stop of the sentence in which he stabs himself, and so of his life. Many biblical and classical allusions are noted, but one could add Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, twice translated in the sixteenth century, as giving specific meaning to Iago's ability to 'distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury' (I. iii. 314), and to Othello's greeting Iago's 'love | Not with vain thanks but with acceptance bounteous' (III. iii. 473–4). Here the note records that 'bounteous' was 'normally used of the giver rather than the receiver' (p. 240): precisely the point made by Seneca, who conceptualizes the gift process into three stages, giving: accepting: repaying, and lays great emphasis on the need to accept a gift generously. At one point Honigmann notes that the phrase 'prophetic fury' (III. iv. 74) may derive from *furor profetico* in *Orlando Furioso*, but that 'if so, Shakespeare knew Ariosto in the original', since Harington's translation reads otherwise (p. 245). But A. S. Cairncross cited other evidence that Shakespeare had indeed read Ariosto in Italian, in an article ('Shakespeare and Ariosto', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), 178–82), which Professor Honigmann himself cites a few pages later (p. 254). 'Knowledge is not always present', Johnson observed: but Honigmann's extensive knowledge illuminates this play at every turn, making this the best edition of *Othello* now available.

In Lois Potter's edition *The Two Noble Kinsmen* appears for the first time in the Arden series, although it has been included in the Signet Classic Shakespeare (1966; ed. Clifford Leech), in the Regents Renaissance Drama (1970; ed. G. R. Proudfoot), and in the Oxford Shakespeare (1989; ed. E. M. Waith). For her introduction Professor Potter is given enormously more space than earlier editors (129 pages), but hardly makes the best use of it.

The first issues that most readers will want to face are, how do we know that this play is collaborative, and which dramatist wrote which scenes? Here, though, they must wade through a discussion of the genre, tragi-comedy (pp. 2–6), a largely biographical discussion of 'The Collaborators' (pp. 6–16), a section on 'The Authorship Question' (pp. 16–23), and another on 'Collaboration and Censorship' (pp. 24–34). Here, finally, the editor discusses the allocation of responsibility, in which all the theories ever made are summarized, and tentatively adds her own. The confused presentation of this issue, which forgoes any discussion of the criteria currently used to identify authorship, and reports rival theories without being able to adjudicate between them, suggests that Potter is ill at ease with authorship studies (which are becoming increasingly technical). Indeed, she feels that discussions of the authorship question have blocked off appreciation of the play itself (p. 96), which is 'why, having "deconstructed" the play in this section, I have chosen not to do so in the text or notes, which, as far as possible, will refrain from identifying the assumed author of each scene' (p. 34). But I think it legitimate that readers should want to know the author of each scene, and that they should realize the scholarly issues involved, since such a fundamental matter as the canon of Shakespeare should not become the province of specialists, who may be making a mess of it.

The introduction is no doubt comprehensive, Potter giving the impression of having read everything ever written on the play. It gives no less than twenty pages to the sources, from the Greeks onwards, and ten pages to staging and casting. Then we reach 'The Play's Afterlife' (pp. 69–110), which includes a long and largely unrewarding survey of theatrical productions (including an amateur performance at the University of Utrecht) with ten full-page photographs, and a shorter section on the play's interpretation. Potter's generosity in quoting critical opinion without taking up any position herself will leave many readers in difficulty. In one paragraph we are given the opinions of De Quincey that the style of I. i is 'gorgeous rhetoric', of L. Magnusson that it is actually bathetic, and of M. Lief and N. Radel that 'the bathos is a deliberate subversion (by *both* dramatists) of the characters' pretensions'. This critical disagreement suggests to the editor a parallel with *Troilus and Cressida*, which in turn leads her to quote an (unusually vapid) observation by Russ McDonald on the style of *The Tempest*, which makes her recollect J. P. Houston's comparison of the style of *Cymbeline*, 'with its unusual number of parentheses . . . to that of Henry James in his last works', which in turn makes her point out that some of these parentheses may derive from the scribe Ralph Crane (p. 97). It is hard to see what all this has to do with *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

There is an efficient discussion of the text (pp. 111–29) with mercifully few digressions, although the two-page reproductions of the 1634 Quarto are too small and fuzzy to be of use, and there are no less than six appendices. These include the complete text of Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* (1613), in which the morris dance in III. v had been presented, which hardly seems necessary, followed by a separate discussion of that masque, and an additional section on morris dances. The 'remaining appendices', as the editor disarmingly puts it, 'provide information and conjecture which, although perhaps more detailed than most readers will want, might be of interest to anyone thinking of staging the play' (p. 331). The trouble is that at every level this edition provides more information than most readers will want, such as: 'For the sake of completeness, it may be worth noting that a few lines of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* appear, rather incongruously, in *Edward the Black Prince, or, She Never Told Her Love*, produced at Drury Lane in 1828 (British Library Add. MS 42, 889)' (pp. 77–8). This is a particularly glaring instance of the diligent scholar either unwilling not to communicate the whole of her notebook or unable to distinguish the important from the irrelevant. Professor Potter's absorption in the play seems to have removed her powers of discrimination. In the Oxford

edition Eugene Waith covers all the major issues in about half the space. Having briefly reviewed the date of production and printing, Waith immediately tackles the authorship question, concisely discussing the criteria of verse-style, vocabulary, and dramatic form (nineteen pages). He gives three pages to the text, three to the sources, fourteen to performance history, and twenty-three to critical interpretations, in each case covering the ground lucidly and economically. Although specialists will want to consult Potter, Waith's is the edition to have.

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JONATHAN BATE. **Shakespeare and Ovid.** Pp. xvi+292. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. £35.

The clarity and detail of argument, and elegance of style, make this a delightful book even when it does not fully persuade. A point of departure is Meres's 1598 comparison of Shakespeare with Ovid. The 'stylistic and spiritual resemblance' (p. 3) argued for is indisputable, but 'resemblance' slides into identity, as in Meres's original comparison. Such over-identification is initiated by Bate's statement that Ovid was 'Shakespeare's favourite author, probably his favourite in any language' (p. vii). This is true for Shakespeare's youth, but his favourite authors in maturity were arguably Plutarch, Montaigne, Horace, and Aristotle. This perceptible shift shows perhaps most clearly what Shakespeare did not find in Ovid and sought elsewhere—a deeper interest in ἦθος and philosophical reflection. To look at the way Shakespeare was tugged in this direction is the task of a different book; but some awareness of Shakespeare's ethical interests is highly relevant here because it colours his whole outlook and use of Ovid in ways that Bate does at times underestimate.

Bate pays more than lip-service to Shakespeare's humanist background, but though the humanist concern with ethics is acknowledged (pp. 9, 11, 20, 26, 31) it is not always put to work in individual interpretations; or it is put to work very well (Orsino as Actaeon and Narcissus, p. 146; bestiality in *Othello*, pp. 182–4; Othello, Myrrha, and repentance, p. 188; Albany's reproach to Goneril, p. 193), but with no sense that the results contradict earlier general statements. For Bate tries to make an anachronistic distinction between the moral and the psychological (pp. 53–4), as if psychology could be value-free, in an attempt repeatedly to dissociate Shakespeare from the moral. Golding reads Ovid for moral, Shakespeare for psychological, wisdom (pp. 135–6). But the term 'psychopathologist', opposed by Bate to 'moralist' (p. 53), presupposes evaluation, as does the notion of 'monstrous human behaviour' (p. 28). Ovid himself is emptied of any moral attitude as Bate eagerly washes off centuries of medieval and early Renaissance allegorizing and moralizing (not the same, though often found together), claiming, I am sure rightly, that Shakespeare bypassed the mythographies and went directly to Ovid (pp. 27, 31), but also clearly implying that Shakespeare had no time for 'the moralizing tradition' (pp. 31, 176). Shakespeare is drawn closer still to this Ovid, so that his—and Ovid's—moral interests tend to be flattened: 'As so often, Shakespeare bypasses the moralizing tradition and returns to Ovid himself, who drives the original narrative with Phaethon's energy and recklessness' (p. 176). But the very term used here—*recklessness*—is moral, and so undermines Bate's own argument: for Golding's explicit 'moralization'—'ambition blynd, and youthfull wilfulnesse' (cited p. 31)—just happens to be Ovid's also. Bate's statement is odd coming immediately after he has shown (perhaps inadvertently) how receptive *Richard II* is to so many of the myth's standard moral-cum-political sixteenth-century interpretations, represented by Sabinus, Golding, and Sandys (pp. 173–6). He claims that there is in *Richard II* 'a characteristic shift of emphasis from moral judgement to psychological insight'

